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ALBERTA BIRD ATLAS NEWSLETTER

A Project of the Federation of Alberta Naturalists

Vol. 5, No. 2

Editor: H. Loney Dickson
Executive Director: Albert Brulé

Summer, 1991

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LET'S GET IT DONE IN '91

No matter what the folks in Lloydminster say, Spring is here and so is the atlassing season! And after months of planning and preparation, we're ready for it.

1991 promises to be the biggest year yet for the atlas – with supporters from throughout the province lending a hand to fill in the gaps and finish those last minute confirmations. Along with our solid core of dedicated Regional Coordinators and volunteers, we have five Blockbusting Teams heading North, South, East, and West to assist regions with more difficult areas. We also have personnel and logistical support from many district offices of Alberta Fish and Wildlife, Alberta Forest Service, and Public Lands. Atlassing kits have been distributed to many new volunteers as well as to 146 fire tower lookouts across Alberta. In addition, 16 remote area trips have been planned to tackle some of the northern squares.

We are definitely on a roll. So let's keep the momentum going! It is absolutely **essential** that **everyone** accomplish the task they've signed on for. Remember folks, there's no next year to fall back on. So let's get it done in '91! ❑

FAREWELL TO ALBERT BRULÉ

Albert Brulé, with regret, has resigned his position as Executive Director of the Alberta Bird Atlas Project as of April 30th. He would have liked to see the Atlas through to its conclusion but the offer to take a full time position with the new funding Foundation for the Royal Alexandra Hospital was too appealing to turn down. We shall miss his cheerful presence. Albert has set up a good system at the Project Headquarters, and his two assistants, Petra Stubbs and Carolyn Seburn, are more than capable of carrying out the ambitious plans for the 1991 final season.

We wish Albert *Good Luck* in his new position and thank him for his efforts on behalf of the Atlas. ❑

— Pat Clayton

LOOKING FORWARD

By the time this newsletter goes to press the Alberta Bird Atlas Project Management Committee will have the next step of the project under way with the selection of an Editor/Writer. The selected individual will be charged with carrying out and overseeing the publication of the final product of our five years of data collection. ❑

— Pat Clayton

FUNDING

The Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation has been most generous in its support of the Atlas project. They, and a whole host of individuals, corporations, trusts and organizations have all contributed financially and in kind over the years but, the project has to help itself too. We sold calendars last year (hard work, fun, but small return) so this year it is to be a Casino. The date is still to be drawn but it will be in the October-December slot and at the West Edmonton Mall location; proceeds go towards data publication. If you have had experience with Casinos we can sure use your help. To volunteer your expertise please give your names to the Atlas office: 453-9188. ❑

— Pat Clayton

BLOCKBUSTERS HIT THE ROAD!

In the 1991 Alberta Bird Atlas Project (ABAP) strategy, we outlined the need to hire blockbusting teams to work in areas of remote access or in the area with insufficient volunteer manpower. This is necessary if we are going to achieve satisfactory provincial coverage, in this, our last year of data collection.

Here at project headquarters, we have filled out all the required application forms... and more application forms... dotted our t's and crossed our i's... with some very positive results!

This summer the ABAP will have on staff 10 eagle-eyed individuals who will form five Blockbusting teams to scout the province from one end to the other, leaving no tern unstoned (its such a good line, we just can't stop using it). Blockbusters include our six CJSP trainees, three SEED positions (one of which we are pleased to announce has been filled by our very own Bob Storms), and one STEP position on loan from the Edson Fish and Wildlife office.

...continued

SHOUT
SHARE
IT

Team members and the general area they will be atlassing in are as follows:

Team 1 (Regions 4, 6)
Craig Machtans
Selena Cole
Pat Marklevitz

Team 2 (Regions 5, 8)
Karen Aldred
Karen Dudley

Team 3 (Regions 5, 2)
Mike Breauer
Scott Millar

Team 4 (Region 3)
Bob Storms
(Bob will also help coordinate Team 3 with Regions 1 and 2)

Team 5 (Regions 9, 10)
Boyd Fischer
Michael Harrison

Anyone interested in finding out more about blockbuster whereabouts this summer, please contact the head office. We would greatly appreciate it if RC's, or any of their volunteers, could lend their expertise to our blockbusting teams this summer. And I'm sure the blockbusters would greatly enjoy some company from time to time. ❑

WANTED: ALIVE
Northern Leopard Frogs

The Northern Leopard Frog has declined dramatically in Alberta over the last decade. Researchers are puzzled by this and ask for your help in solving this dilemma. If you come across any Northern Leopard Frogs while atlassing this summer, please contact your local Fish and Wildlife office with the location, date, and numbers seen – or drop a note to:
Steve Brechtel, Non-game Biologist, Alberta Fish and Wildlife, 6909 – 116 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 4P2, (403) 422-9335.

The Northern Leopard Frog can be identified by its dark spots with a light border on a green or brown background. It has a light coloured lateral line from each eye ridge down the back and a creamy-white underside. Its call can be a guttural snore or a woodpecker sound with a slowly dropping pitch.) ❑

NEW SPECIES!

The following are species not on our data cards but reported by Atlassers. Note that not all of these reports have been documented so if you know of an elusive egret or a secretive thrasher, or of any other rare bird, please let us know! (With the proper documentation forms, of course!) ❑

— Carolyn Seburn

SPECIES	REGIONS	3 OF REPORTS	BREEDING LEVEL
Sage Thrasher	2	4	NY
Scarlet Tanager	2	1	H
Snowy Egret	2	1	X
Sabine's Gull	2, 8	3	X
Eastern Meadowlark	2, 7	3	T
Northern Cardinal	3	1	X
Fork-tailed Flycatcher	3	1	X
Costa's Hummingbird	4	1	X
Hoary Redpoll	5, 7	4	X
Thayer's Gull	5, 8	2	X
Common Barn Owl	5	1	X
Bendire's Thrasher	6	1	X
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	7	1	H
Cattle Egret	7	1	X
Great Egret	7, 9	2	X
Black Duck	8, 9	2	H
Ruff	8, 9	2	X
Red Phalarope	8	1	X
Ancient Murrelet	8	1	X
Iceland Gull	8	1	X
Great Black-backed Gull	8	1	X

DID YOU KNOW...

That the computer that houses the thousands of lines of instruction code to categorize and index the tens of thousands of Atlasser sightings is only nine blocks away from Arrow's nest. Who's Arrow? Why she is Edmonton's resident Peregrine Falcon! What's *the computer?* Well, we will tell you more about that in the next issue. ❑

RARE BIRD COMMITTEE

The Alberta Bird Atlas Project now has a Rare Bird Committee! That means we need your rare bird documentation forms in as soon as possible. All species on the data card with a * next to the name require documentation. (We realize that this may require a little digging on your part, however any notes you may be able to provide on any asterisked species you've

seen in the past will be **very** helpful in determining the range and abundance of these species of concern.)

Documentations will also be requested for other sightings depending on the recommendations of the Regional Coordinators. **All documentations for sightings prior to the 1991 field season should be sent to head office by September 1.** All documentations for 1991 sightings are due by October 30. If you have any questions regarding this procedure or you would like to participate in the Rare Bird Committee please contact:

Loney Dickson 468–8917)
Gerry Lunn (428–7900), or
Carolyn Seburn (453–9189). ❑

IF YOU CALL INTO THE OFFICE THIS SUMMER...

The Bird Atlas Office will be well staffed this summer. Petra continues to organize the field programs and our walls are plastered with maps showing where everyone is supposed to be, what has been done and what is yet to be assigned. Carolyn is organizing the Other Sources of Data campaign and doing the ground work for the Rare Bird Committee.

To help with the overload we've brought on a new STEP position filled by Leland Ferguson. Leland is here on a STEP position for the summer. He will help out with the **Other Sources Of Data** campaign and with organizing the species documentation requests. He's also here to help answer people's questions over the summer. Leland is a Zoology student from U of A and an avid birder.

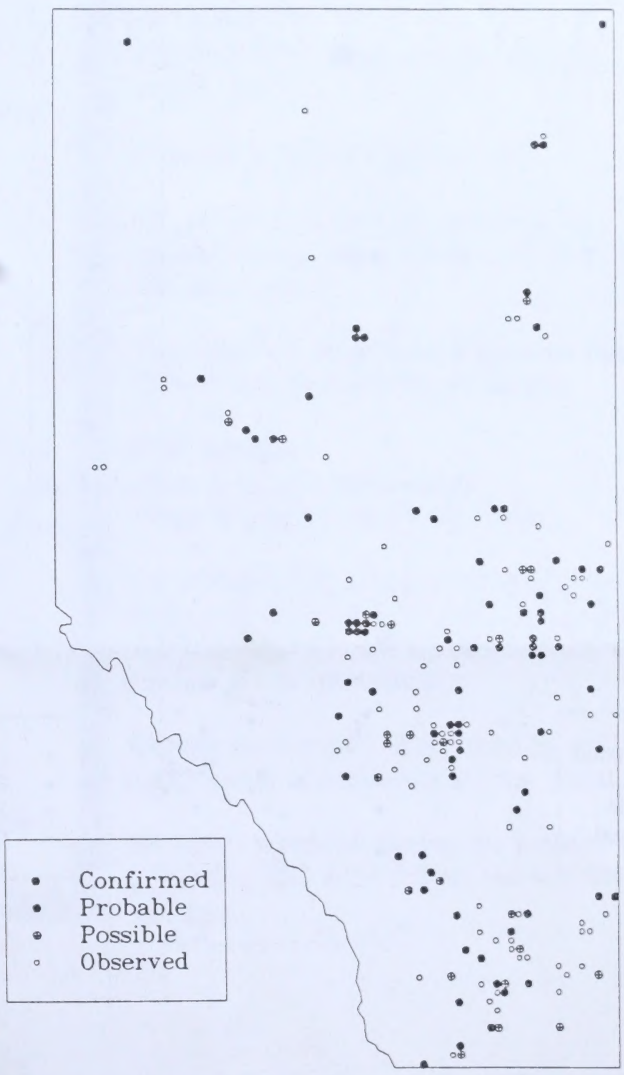
Between the three of us, there will always be someone in the office to keep things running smoothly and to answer the phones, so please don't hesitate to call! ❑

ALBERTA BIRD ATLAS DISTRIBUTION MAPS #2

In hopes of providing further encouragement for Atlassers to charge out and get more data, this article adds a few more species maps to those provided in Volume 5 Number 1 of this Newsletter. I have again stuck to using Salt & Salt (1976) as a reference to historical information. People may want to pull out their last issue of the Newsletter and make a clear overlay of the rivers in the province from the Ferruginous Hawk map. You could then superimpose the overlay on the new maps to help in locating specific records.

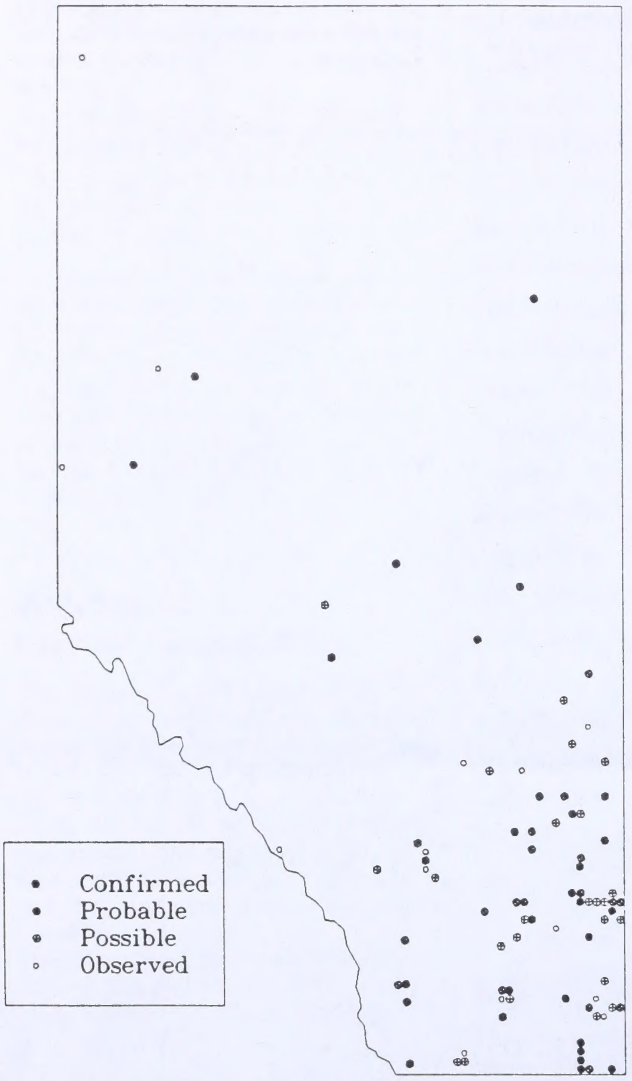
Common Tern

No big surprises here from the historical data. Our map also shows that the birds are found throughout Alberta east of the mountains. There are, however, over 90 records on the map with a breeding rating of less than probable. It is possible that there are not a lot of breeding sites for common tern in the province, but the map hints that there are still a few sites out there to confirm. *Let's get em!*



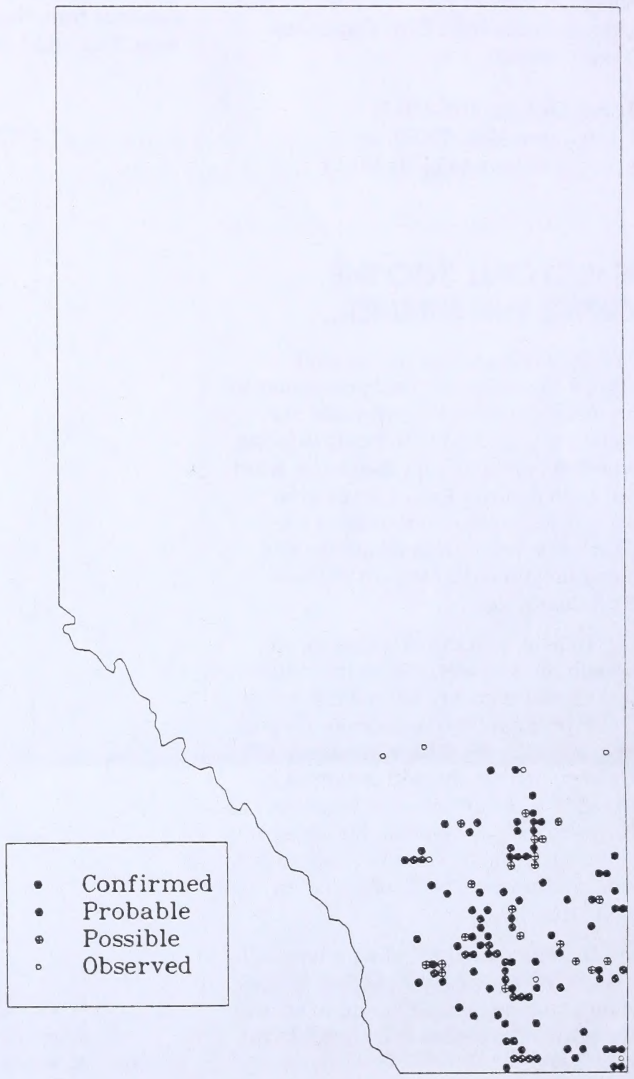
Upland Sandpiper

Again the Bird Atlas maps show no records out of the historical breeding range. The map may, however, be indicating that this bird is even less common than when Salt & Salt wrote the *Birds of Alberta.* Keep an eye on native prairie sites for this uncommon Sandpiper.



Burrowing Owl

This map is great! It truly catches the essence of the nesting distribution for the species in the prairies of Alberta. The records to the north may be slight extensions from those reported in The Birds of Alberta. It would be great if people could get out and confirm those sightings on the map reported as only *possible* or *observed.*



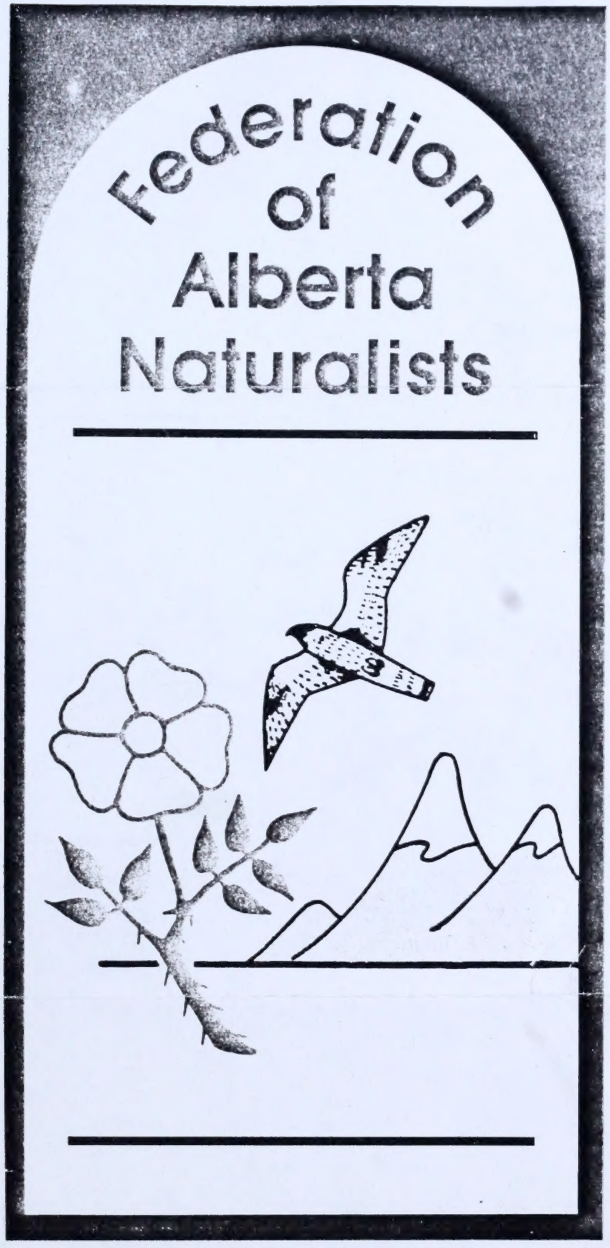
CANADIANA
AUG - 6 1991

COMPETITION

for a

COVER PHOTO for the

ALBERTA BIRD ATLAS



The Editorial Committee for the Alberta Bird Atlas Project announces that amateur and professional photographers are eligible to participate in this unique photo event.

ENTRIES:

-Maximum of 3, 35mm colour slides per submission.

-Originals or high quality duplicates.

-All entries must have the photographer's name, address, phone number and slide title on each mount.

-Photos must be of wild birds normally found in Alberta and photographed in Alberta.

REWARDS:

-Photo credit for cover photo.
-Public display of top twenty entries.

The selection panel's choice of the top twenty photos will be printed, mounted and displayed (at a later date) at the Provincial Museum, at no expense to the photograhper.

Winning finalists will be contacted by mail to sign a waiver of exclusivity for one year.

All Slides submitted become the property of the Alberta Bird Atlas Project and will not be returned.

Closing date for entries: October 31, 1991.

Mail or deliver to: The Editor, Alberta Bird Atlas Project,
c/o Provincial Museum of Alberta,
12845 - 102 Avenue T5M 0M6.

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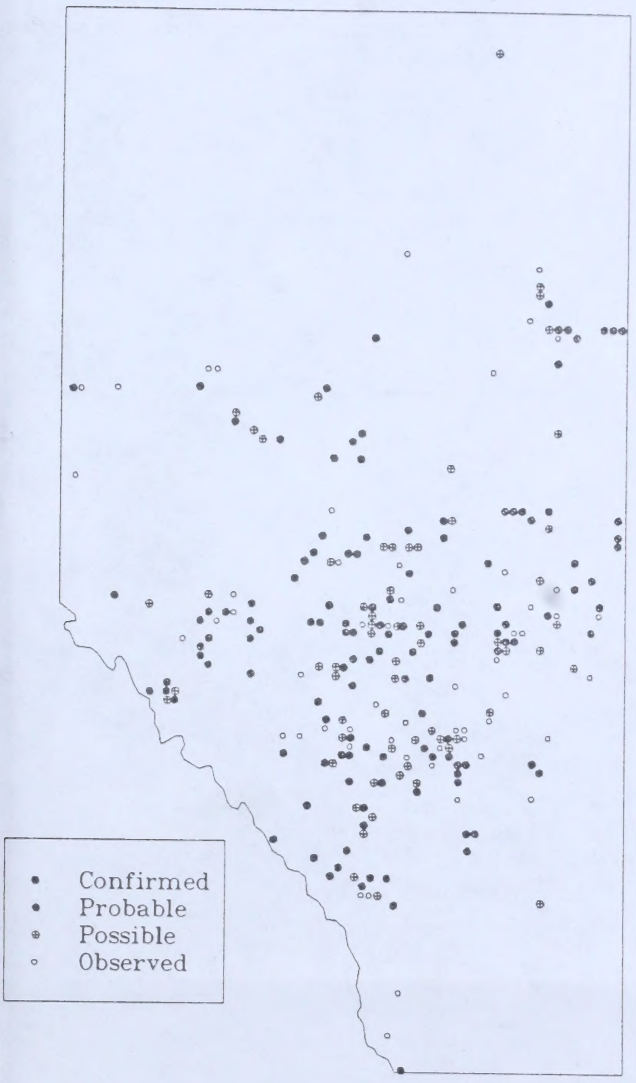
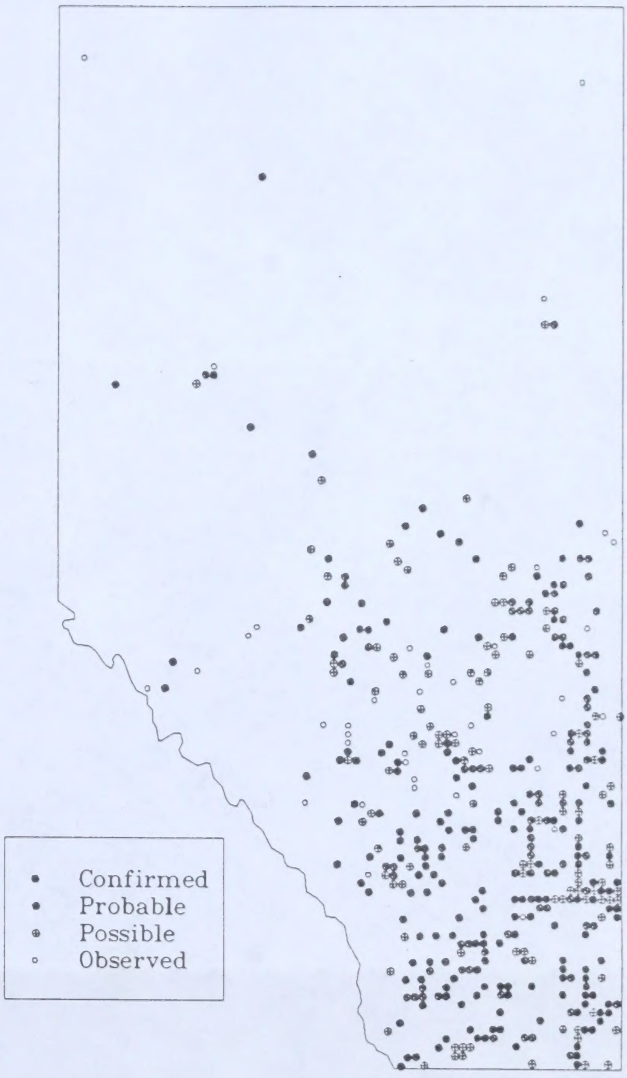


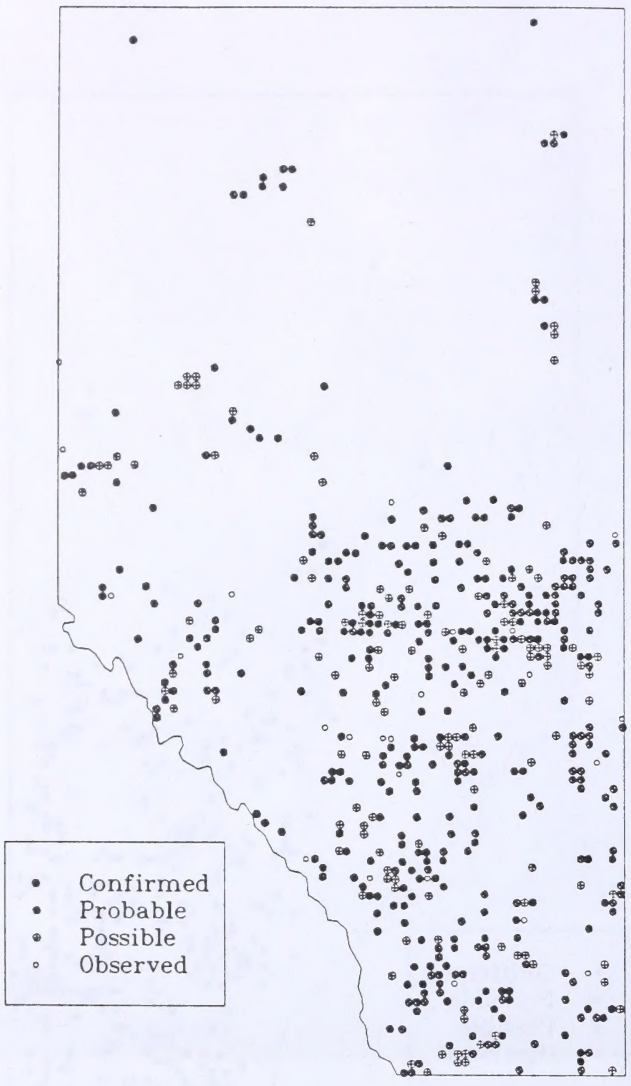


Pileated Woodpecker

Not many confirmed or probable records for this elusive, but spectacular species on our maps so far. The distribution of the Atlas records reflects those of the historical data except for areas in the northwest of the province. There should be records in this area as well. Our map may be reflecting the difficulty of getting into the remote northern areas of the province.

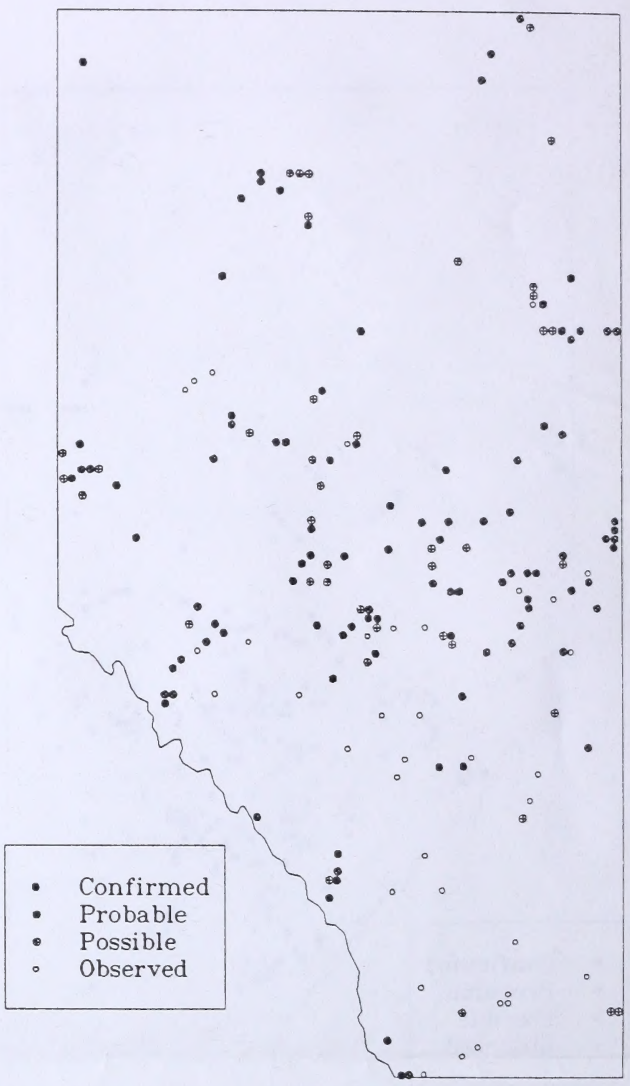
Western Meadowlark

The Atlas is definitely showing the distribution of this nesting species – even illustrating the band of nesting territory which Salt & Salt (1976) reported stretching northwest up past Lesser Slave Lake. The Atlas map shows some new records in the north end of the province (2 probables, 1 possible and 3 observed records). These are all north of the historical range.



Savannah Sparrows

No surprises here except for a relatively sparse number of dots for an historically very common species. Lots of room for improvement, particularly in the north and south end of the province.



American Redstart

This species seems to be extending its breeding range into the central southeast area a little more than historical records show. The disjunct nesting population reported by Salt & Salt (1976) also shows up on our maps but only as possible nesters. – Now there's a definite challenge for someone out in the southeast!

ALBERTA BIRD ATLAS PROJECT, C/O
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CULTURE AND MULTICULTURALISM
PROVINCIAL MUSEUM OF ALBERTA
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Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
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